

REMARKS

The Applicants respectfully submit this Amendment in response to the Office Action mailed on 27 December 2006.

In the Office Action of 12 December 2006, it was indicated that claims 10-17 were allowed. In response, the Applicants respectfully acknowledge the Examiner's indication of allowability of such claims and submit that claims 10-17 should be entitled to a broad scope of coverage as warranted under the law.

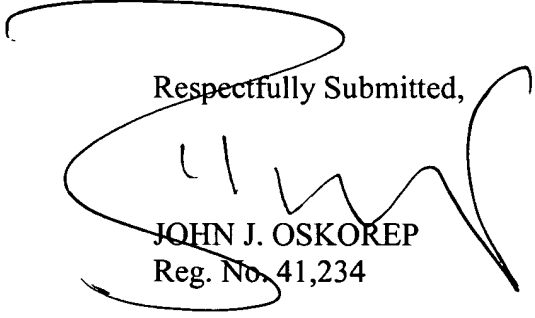
In the same Office Action, it was indicated that the title should be amended and that non-elected claims 1-9 and 18-27 should be canceled. In response, the Applicant amends the title as suggested by the Examiner and cancels claims 1-9 and 18-27.

In the same Office Action, the shortened statutory period for response indicated was unclear. On the cover page of the Office Action, the communication indicated a two-month shortened statutory period of response to the Office Action. On the other hand, in the letter of the Office Action, the communication indicated a one-month shortened statutory period of response to the Office Action, without extension, which conflicts with the earlier-indicated two-month indication.

In connection with the one-month period for reply, the communication further stated that "[t]he objective of the accelerated examination program is to complete the examination of an application within twelve months from the filing date of the application. Any reply must be filed electronically via EFS-Web so that the papers will be expeditiously processed and considered." However, the Applicants are not aware of any accelerated examination program made in connection with this application. In addition, this application has no history of being filed via EFS. Finally, the filing date of the application is 27 February 2004, which is over two years ago. The Applicants respectfully request clarification regarding the above, if needed.

Thank you. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if necessary to expedite this matter.

Respectfully Submitted,


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